DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 216 517 FL 012 874

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TITLE Research on Minority Languages and Educational Achievement: A Synthesis and an Interpretation.
PUB DATE Dec 81
NOTE 40p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association (80th, Los Angeles, CA, December 2-6, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; Classroom Communication; Cultural Background; Disadvantaged; Discourse Analysis; Educational Change; *Educationally Disadvantaged; Educational Policy; *Equal Education; Ethnography; Language Research; *Language Role; Minority Group Children; *Minority Groups; Multicultural Education; Social Status; Social Structure; *Sociolinguistics

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the relationship between minority languages/cultures and educational achievement in mixed industrial societies, highlighting, in particular, the role of language and discourse strategies in the reproduction of educational inequality. Three major factors underlying accounts of inequalities in social and educational opportunities are noted: (1) language and discourse strategies; (2) cultural background and modes of cultural reproduction, including the transmission of knowledge; (3) social structure and modes of social reproduction, including the distribution of social, economic, and political roles. Studies of educational inequality that have been sociolinguistic in nature have been criticized largely for focusing on micro processes which lead them to produce "how" rather than "why" explanations. These criticisms are responded to through highlighting the role of language and communicative conventions in restricting access to knowledge, pointing out how inequalities in the management of positively sanctioned communicative conventions can help unearth and perpetuate other inequalities. The approach adopted focuses on how misunderstanding, miscommunication, or negative evaluation can arise in the course of conversation, reading, or writing. Natural conversational data provides insight into the process by which interlocuters' use of discourse strategies and sociocultural knowledge can enhance or mitigate access to knowledge or life chances. (Author/JK)

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RESEARCH ON MINORITY LANGUAGES AND EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT: A SYNTHESIS AND AN INTERPRETATION

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Paper presented at a Symposium:

Urban Communication and Social Inequality

American Anthropological Association

80th Annual Meeting

Los Angeles, Dec. 2-6, 1981

FL012874

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RESEARCH ON MINORITY LANGUAGES AND EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT: A SYNTHESIS AND AN INTERPRETATION*

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1. You may have noticed that participants at this symposium have repeatedly pointed to problems of social inequality, each participant reporting a case study documenting how misunderstanding, misevaluation, or differential treatment can arise from "mismatch" in code choice, communicative conventions, or evaluational criteria.[1] In this summary/review paper, I have chosen to focus on the relationship between minority languages/cultures and educational achievement in mixed industrial societies, highlighting, in particular, the role of language and discourse strategies in the reproduction of educational inequality (cf. Collins, 1981; Michaels, 1981).

2. A review of the literature reveals that there are three major factors underlying accounts of inequalities in social and educational opportunities: (a) language and discourse strategies; (b) cultural background and modes of cultural reproduction, including the transmission of knowledge; and (c) social structure and modes of social reproduction, including the distribution of social, economic, and political roles. Overarching culture and social structure is the role of power

and ideology in education, for example as recently noted by Michael Apple: "The ability of a group to make its knowledge into 'knowledge for all' is related to that group's power in the larger political and economic arena. Power and culture, then, need not be seen as static entities with no connections to each other, but as attributes of existing economic relations in a society" (1979, p. 64). To the extent that ideological and cultural hegemony are perpetuated mainly through language, it follows that the three factors outlined above (language, culture, and social structure) are closely interrelated.

The cultural, structural, and linguistic problems underlying educational inequality vary in importance according to the nature of the society being studied, the enormity of the problems increasing with the morphological complexity of the society. Researchers have stressed one or the other of these problems according to their disciplinary and theoretical orientations. For example, sociolinguists stress the importance of language and discourse strategies in perpetuating inequality while other social scientists emphasize macro-sociological factors, advancing functionalist, structuralist, ecological, or conflict explanations (see Karabel and Halsey, 1977; and Jacob, 1981, for a review). However, ignoring the fact that any explanation of social phenomena is, at best, a partial explanation, non-linguists have recently begun to criticize sociolinguistic explanations of social and educational inequalities (Ogbu, 1974, 1981; Karabel and Halsey, 1977; Jacob, 1981). It

is our view that these criticisms should be viewed seriously, although, as I will point out later, they seem to be unaware of recent trends in conversational analysis which emphasize the recovery, from natural conversational data, of underlying sociocultural knowledge and structural constraints on conversational interaction (Gumperz, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1980, 1982a; Collins and Michaels, 1980; Michaels, 1982).

3. Sociolinguistic studies of educational inequality have been criticized largely for focusing on micro processes which lead them to produce *how* rather than *why* explanations. There are, altogether, three interrelated criticisms. First, it is argued that by focusing on processes, sociolinguistic and other microcosmic studies tend to neglect the social and structural constraints on human actors, thereby ignoring "forces of the wider ecological environment" (Ogbu, 1981, p. 11; see also, Karabel and Halsey, 1977, p. 58). The second major criticism is endemic to microcosmic studies: a circumscribed setting, few subjects, and limited data. The third criticism focuses on whether "mismatch" in language and communicative norms can explain social and educational inequalities.

In support of the attack on language, Ogbu (1981) raises the following objections: (a) If communicative "mismatch" exists for all minorities, how do we account for the relatively greater school success of *immigrant* as opposed to *caste-like* minorities? (b) How do we account for the lack of improvement

in the performance of minority children when taught by teachers of the same cultural and linguistic background? (c) Why have "language repair" programs failed to improve the performance of minority students? (d) Can we effect social and educational change by "fixing" the language and communicative etiquette of minority students? These criticisms are interrelated, and they are all justified to the extent that each of them can be empirically demonstrated to be valid. However, as indicated earlier, they do not apply to all sociolinguistic studies of educational inequality. Besides, the criticisms beg a major theoretical question, namely, how are social and educational inequalities reproduced?

4. I shall respond to these criticisms by highlighting the role of language and communicative conventions in restricting access to knowledge, pointing out how inequalities in the management of positively sanctioned communicative conventions can help unearth and perpetuate other inequalities.[2] My starting point derives from everyday experience: Language is the major medium for the storage and transmission of knowledge. In fact, whichever way we want to argue the relationship between language, culture, and cognition, it is possible to propose and defend the equation, Knowledge = Language. This is particularly so in school settings where the evaluation of students' knowledge, intelligence, and performance is based mainly on their linguistic and communicative ability. The role of language in

the storage, acquisition, and transmission of knowledge is recognized in every human society, literate or nonliterate. A major example of the codification of knowledge in nonliterate societies is divination--a complex communicative skill which has to be acquired through special "schooling." Successful candidates, known as diviners, are distinguished from ordinary people by the stylized and elevated forms of their language. Divination is in itself a body of specially codified knowledge and diviners are the controllers of knowledge in their societies, functioning as gatekeepers in educational, cultural, philosophical, political, and other matters (Akinnaso, 1981a, 1982a).

The linguistic sophistication and communicative strategies required for the acquisition of divining knowledge in nonliterate societies are paralleled in literate societies by the emphasis on language and relevant communicative strategies in the acquisition of literacy. There is, however, a difference in scale and complexity between knowledge acquisition in nonliterate societies and access to knowledge in literate societies. In the former situation, competition is generally limited to members of the same cultural-linguistic group, although, as in literate societies, recruitment is often based on social origin and ability to perform relevant communicative tasks. However, in mixed industrial economies such as the United States, isolated "tribes" have diffused within the urban metropolis, so that pluralism in language and culture is the norm rather than the

exception (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz, 1981; Cook-Gumperz, 1981). This picture has been recently confounded by the new wave of immigrants, e.g., from Vietnam, Laos, Cuba, South Africa, and the Far and Middle East. Thus, many American classrooms have become more ethnically diverse than before, with many children speaking little or no English, but rather speaking the languages of the many new immigrant groups - Vietnamese, Lao, Hmoung, Korean, and other languages unfamiliar to teachers.[3] In such situations, the language of the dominant or controlling group is usually the language of control, i.e., of the distribution of educational, social, and economic resources. In addition, literate societies rely mainly on the written rather than the oral mode for the storage and transmission of knowledge, whereas writing is, by definition, absent in nonliterate societies. While the oral mode is the sole medium of instruction in the formative years of schooling, emphasis on the written mode increases with advancement in training. The oral and written modes used in school settings are usually based on the language and communicative norms of the dominant or powerful group.

Thus, in the United States, "Standard" English (based on white middle class sociolinguistic norms) is the language of control, that is, the language of writing and the unmarked language in marked settings. This means that in educational, bureaucratic, and other formal settings, interaction conventions are based on the cultural-linguistic conventions of the dominant group, thus placing at a disadvantage others whose systems of social and

cultural reproduction are entirely different. This situation biases the educational system in favor of those who share the cultural and communicative conventions of the dominant group. Bourdieu puts the implications thus:

> An educational system which puts into practice an implicit pedagogic action, requiring initial familiarity with the dominant culture, and which proceeds by imperceptible familiarization, offers information and training which can be received and acquired only by subjects endowed with the system of predispositions that is the condition for the success of the transmission and of the inculcation of the culture. . . This [system of predispositions] consists mainly of linguistic and cultural competence. . .(1973, p. 78).

Yet, this is the case in modern industrial societies where the communicative conventions of the dominant group constitute what Bourdieu calls the medium of "pedagogic communication." This is the unmarked medium

(a) for encoding and decoding the curriculum; i.e., for defining and interpreting the boundaries of what counts as valid knowledge;
(b) for social interaction during approved activities (reading lessons, sharing time, counseling, etc.);
(c) for the transmission of knowledge (both by the teacher who imparts it, and by the learner in oral and

written test situations); and

(d) for the evaluation of student oral and written performance, and especially for allocating rewards.

In *Class, Codes, and Control, Vol. 3*, Bernstein (1975) puts an extra gloss on the importance of the medium of pedagogic communication by suggesting that modern educational experience consists of three interrelated message systems: "The curriculum defines what counts as valid transmission of knowledge and evaluative techniques define what counts as the valid realization of knowledge on the part of the taught." The patterning of evaluational criteria after the cultural-linguistic conventions of the dominant group is particularly crucial in generating inequalities, not only in educational settings but also in major gate-keeping situations involving the evaluation of competence: application screening (Murray, 1981); job interviews (Akinnaso and Seabrook, 1982; Seabrook, 1981); counseling Erickson, 1976); public and business negotiations (Gumperz, 1978; Young, 1980) etc. Campbell (1981) and Gumperz (1982b) also demonstrate how culturally specific discourse conventions mediate the evaluation of competence in professional and courtroom situations.

Evidence for recognition of, and increased attention to, the role of language in perpetuating educational inequality in the United States is provided by a series of legislative acts such as the Bilingual Education Act of 1968; the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974; and the Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-142). Several

significant decisions resulting from litigation have also highlighted the importance of language in education. Notable landmarks in America's recent legal history include (a) the celebrated "Ann Arbor Decision" involving Black English: *Martin Luther King Junior Elementary School Children, et al. vs. Ann Arbor School District,* and the Supreme Court's 1974 *Lau vs. Nichols* decision, pointing out, among other things, that "students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education" (quoted in King, 1981, p. 166). Several studies of classroom interaction have also showed that the bottom line for educational under-achievement may be differences in patterns of discourse and evaluation of behavioral cues (e.g., Florio, 1978; McDermott, 1978; Mehan, Cazden, Foles, Fisher, and Maroules, 1976; Michaels and Cook-Gumperz, 1979; Gumperz, 1980; Erickson and Mohatt, 1982; Michaels, 1982). Current work at the Center for Applied Linguistics also gives primary attention to the role of language in education (see Wolfram, 1980).

Whorfian as it may seem, the underlying argument is undeniable that cultural and linguistic differences between participants in social interaction often generate further differences, espesially in "background" knowledge and "interpretative frames" (cf. Gumperz, 1977). Such differences are particularly crucial to learning and educability, as Warnock (1975, p. 94) notes,

> Differences in educational group, of 'background' know-

> ledge and already acquired competence are always liable to pose a problem--the extreme case, no doubt, being that of the pupil who has no, or very little, competence even in the *language* which is the locally prevalent medium of teaching. What the problem is, is obvious: in such a situation, either time must be wasted in imparting to some knowledge or competence which others already possess, or things must be said or done which, to some, will be only partially, if at all, intelligible (original emphasis).

In their own assessment of the role of language in education, Cazden and Dickinson (1981) comment as follows:

> . . . as long as the years from 6 to 16 are years of compulsory education, they assume special importance. In those ten to eleven years, every child in this country must spend 1,000 hours a year (5+ hours per day for 180 days) in formal classrooms, where sanctioning particular kinds of language use is a universally accepted objective. What language is sanctioned --valued or suppressed--will bring both benefits and costs. It will affect the achievement of particular academic goals, the development of particular verbal abilities, and the view the child builds of others and of self (p. 447).

While it is true that language is evaluated in every human com-

munity (cf. Hymes, 1964, p. 388) such evaluation takes on added significance in the formal and circumscribed setting of the classroom where absolute power is vested in a single individual teacher, providing or reinforcing the minority child's view of power structure in the wider society.

5. Initial theoretical justification for the role of language in generating educational inequality was provided by Bernstein whose work on class, codes, and educability attempts to explain educational outcome in terms of the linguistic and social class origin of the learner (Bernstein, 1958, 1961, 1962, 1964, 1970, 1971, 1975).[4] Initial attempts to apply Bernstein's approach to minority education in the United States focused on language structure, offering "language deficit," "language difference," and "dialect difference" explanations of school failure. (Bereiter, 1965; Bereiter and Englemann, 1966; Whiteman and Deutsch, 1967; Stewart, 1969; Baratz and Shuy, 1969; Mèlmed, 1970).

These studies represent attempts to explain the educational under-achievement of speakers of minority languages or non-standard dialects in terms of differences between their language varieties and standard English in the areas of phonology, syntax, and lexicon (see Hall and Guthrie, 1980, for a review). This group of studies led to the development and implementation of several intervention programs. For example, Bereiter and Englemann recommended a program of patterned standard English language drill for preschool and primary school children prior

to and during initial reading instructions as well as supplementary commercial programs. It needed a few applications of the compensatory education package, initial research on language universals (Lenneberg, 1967; McNeill, 1970), systematic studies of non-standard dialects (Labov, 1968, 1969; Piestrup, 1973) and a rebuttal (although in very equivocal terms) by Bernstein (1972) to disprove "deficit" and "difference" explanations. With many of the later studies contradicting previous ones, language-structure explanations of educational under-achievement lost their credibility.

In the early 1970s, Susan Philips suggested another language explanation, using the concept of "participant structures," attempting to relate learning and communicative competence to the learner's cultural background (Philips, 1972, 1975). Philips blames the educational failures of minority children on "mismatch" between the participant structures of the student's culture and those of the classroom (other studies using the paradigm include Philips [1975]; Simons [1979]; and Au [1980]). Ogbu's (1981) criticism of sociolinguistic explanations of educational inequality has been based largely on the group of studies reviewed in this section.

6. Our approach differs from language-structure and participant-structure explanations of educational failure in several ways. Rather than simply focus on differences in phonological and grammatical structure or on "mismatch" between par-

ticipant structures, we focus on how misunderstanding, miscommunication, or negative evaluation can arise in the course of conversation, in reading, or in writing. In particular we try to recover from natural conversational data the process by which interlocutors' use of discourse strategies and sociocultural knowledge can enhance or mitigate access to knowledge or life chances (see espécially Gumperz, 1982a; Gumperz, Jupp and Roberts, 1979).

A major limitation of language-structure explanations of educational failure is the preponderant attention given to what Hymes (1977) calls *resource grammar* or "the bare bones of grammatical possibilities," neglecting *discourse grammar* or "the styles and choices involved in use of language" (p. 173). Another shortcoming of language-structure explanations is neglect of curriculum and the mechanics of classroom interaction. While participant-structure explanations attempt to pay attention to discourse grammar, they tend to concentrate on cultural and organizational structures that could promote (or mitigate) learning without showing systematically how those structures are reproduced day by day in the classroom or how differences in participant structures between teacher and pupils interact with both the acquisition process and the evaluation of performance. Indeed, such structures are often identified beforehand and communicative breakdown is assumed rather than demonstrated. Furthermore, participant structure studies seem to recommend either that teachers in multi-ethnic classrooms should learn the different participant structures of the various ethnic groups

represented in the classroom, or that schools should be organized according to ethnic or cultural divisions. While the first recommendation would make the teacher an ineffective, if not unrealistic, "everyman," the second implies reverting to segregated schooling. The fact that studies of participant structures to date have concentrated on marginal or minority populations (Indian Reservations, Hawaiian local schools, etc.) seems to indicate that the paradigm may not be as useful (e.g., in improving the teacher's sensitivity to cultural and linguistic variation) in more heterogenous inner city schools as it may be in local schools where the minority is more often the (Anglo) teacher rather than the child.

Recently, Erickson, in collaboration with his students, extended the notion of participant structures to include nonverbal cues (prosody, kinesics, and proxemics), defining participant structures as tacit rules governing behavior in the areas of speaking, listening, turn-taking, following instructions, etc. Under these rules participants in an interaction are accorded certain communication rights, while being equally obligated to observe the rights of others (Shultz, Florio, and Erickson, 1981). Communication breakdown and misevaluation often arise when knowledge of such rules is not shared.

While recognizing the heuristic value of the notion of participant structures, especially in anlyzing event sequences in the classroom, we feel that studies of classroom learning whould be incomplete without detailed conversational analysis, for it is

largely in the fleeting conversations between teacher and pupil that we can locate the mechanisms by which cultural and structural factors interact with both teaching strategies and acquisition processes to perpetuate structures of inequality. While Erickson's work highlights the correlation between participant structures and teacher-pupil interaction, adding perspectives from non-verbal communication, Gumperz (1980, 1982a, 1982b) outlines both the focus and theoretical apparatus for the analysis of classroom conversation. In these studies, Gumperz has shown that while the classroom or, more specifically, a particular activity (e.g., sharing time) may be the immediate setting for conversational data, the resources that participants draw on in such settings derive largely from their speech communities and social networks. Providing and redefining these resources, which we may refer to as "conversational capital" (following Bourdieu, 1973), are participants' cultural background and modes of cultural reproduction as well as social structure and modes of social reproduction--factors identified at the beginning of this paper as underlying social and educational inequalities. The goal of the kind of conversational analysis being discussed here is to retrieve from surface data the effects that these factors have on teaching strategies, acquisition processes, and methods of evaluation.

In several ways, recent work by Erickson and Mohatt (1982) overlaps with our approach and findings. In this study, Erickson and Mohatt compared the cultural organization of "participation structures" in two classrooms of culturally similar

children taught by teachers whose cultural backgrounds differ (one Indian and the other Anglo). Combining Philip's notion of participation structures and Gumperz's method of conversational analysis, and using direct observation, videotaping and interviews as research techniques, they show how American Indian and Anglo styles of interaction differ to the extent that they affect classroom behavior, especially teaching and learning processes.

Three major aspects of this study also characterize our approach as evidenced by the authors' acknowledgement of theoretical and analytical debt to Gumperz and his collaborators. One is their use, as background data, of ethnographic literature and previous studies of classroom behavior based on the target population they studied. A second similarity is their attention to covert, implicit, or "hidden" cultural patterns that affect behavior and communication, especially in prolonged face-to-face interaction, but that are largely outside the consciousness of the actor. A third, and perhaps most important similarity is their detailed analysis of conversational data, highlighting how such paralinguistic features as pause, stress, pitch, pacing and tempo interact with teaching and learning strategies in ways that accentuate cultural and structural differences (or similarities) between teacher and pupil.

7. This brings us to the question of linkage between macro- and microcosmic studies. An interesting aspect of the

macro-micro debate is the uni-directionality of criticisms. The question one often hears is of the sort "How can sociolinguists sit there in the classroom, observing and recording conversation without caring about what happens between the bedroom and classroom door?" Rarely does the sociolinguist ask the macroethnographer, "How come you talk about educational problems, and the like, without ever stepping beyond the classroom door to see what is going on inside?" There are several ways of looking at these questions. At one level, we might talk about limitations of time and research fund. At another level, we might blame disciplinary and theoretical restrictions. At yet another level, we might wish to distinguish between cultural-historical and contemporaneous causation. In this regard, it can be argued that it is one thing to know the cultural and historical reasons for human behavior; it is another thing to know how current (synchronic) behavior influences participants' interpretation and/or evaluation of what is going on. The situational and temporal boundedness of classroom conversation, patterns of interaction, and evaluation of abilities is therefore a major reason for microcosmic studies of events in the classroom.

Although the temporal and situational specificity of classroom data requires focus on ongoing processes of interaction, critics have rightly pointed out that macro structures must be overtly related to such microcosmic processes partly to account for historical, cultural, and structural factors underlying such processes, and partly to avoid overdramatizing the fragility of

of the daily routine of school life (Karabel and Halsey, 1977, p. 58). Accordingly, the need for linkage of macro- and microcosmic studies has been stressed by sociologists (Keddie, 1971; Young, 1971; Bernstein, 1975; Woods and Hammersley, 1977); by anthropologists (Ogbu, 1978, 1981, 1982a; Spindler, 1982) and by sociolinguists (Gumperz, 1980, 1982b; Heath, 1982a).

It should be noted, however, that while linkange of macro and micro structures is desirable, it is not easy to accomplish. But is seems easier for some than others. For example, while many macroethnographers would have difficulty doing conversational analysis as a result of technical restrictions, it is less likely that socilinguists would have difficulty reading and utilizing ethnograhic studies of the sort provided by macroethnographers, given the fact that most sociolinguists usually receive training in anthropology or sociology. It follows, then, that sociolinguists are at a vantage point in initiating linkage of macro- and microcosmic studies of educational inequality.

There are three major ways to achieve linkage of macro and micro structures. One is to work across the board from the community to the classroom as Ogbu (1981) has suggested. Shirley Heath's work on the acquisition of literacy (Heath, 1977, 1980, 1982a, 1982b) and Erickson's work on counseling (Erickson, 1976; Erickson and Shultz, 1982) provide perhaps the best examples of this approach. While Erickson did extensive community ethnography in several Black neighborhoods before embarking on micro analysis of counseling involving Blacks as clients, Heath did

both community and classroom ethnography in a working-class community of Black residents spanning a period of five years. One of the major goals of her research was "to indicate how ethnographic data on verbal strategies in community and home settings can be useful for comparison with data collected in studies of the functions of language in the classroom" (Heath, 1982a, p. 105; cf. Cazden et. al, 1974). Thus, from classroom observation of how communication and teaching/learning processes are grossly impaired by differences in styles of questioning and answering used by Black children and white teachers, Heath (1982a) found that she had to go well beyond the classroom to patterns of interaction in the wider community, compairing styles of questioning and answering in both the homes of Anglo teachers and of Black children. The differences she noted between Anglo and Black questioning/answering strategies led her to recommend a two-way path intervention:

> The task of schools is to transmit certain kinds of content and skills, but much of this transmission depends on classroom questions. For Trackton students to succeed academically, therefore, they had to learn to use questions according to the rules of classroom usage. However, intervention did not have to be one-way; teachers could also learn about the rules for community uses of questions. The choice in intervention was therefore not only to change Trackton students, but also to provide an opportunity for alterations in

teachers' behaviors and knowledge (Heath, 1982a, p. 123-124).

Three things have to be noted about Heath's approach. First, the researcher must be *both* an anthropologist and a linguist. Secondly, such a community-to-school study requires long-term research. Thirdly, the analyst is required to focus on specific and previously defined issues, thereby ignoring several others; for example, in the study reviewed above, the focus was on cultural differences between Anglos and Blacks in the performance of specific communicative tasks rather than on structural (e.g., stratificational) differences between whites and Blacks. Thus the study cannot tell us about such things as Black unemployment and the "survival strategies" they employ to make ends meet. These three factors are, of course, sources of strength and of weakness. For example, while they promote an integrated analysis of the issues, they do not always guarantee that all issues relevant to Black educational under-achievement will be discovered.

In view of these limitations, then, perhaps the most practical way to achieve linkage of macro and micro issues in educational research is for microethnographers to base their studies in communities that have been well studied by educational anthropologists and for which there are several published ethnographic reports which can be used as background data for micro or processual investigations. If I may suggest a few, there are Stockton which has been well studied by Ogbu (1974, 1978, 1981, 1982a,

1982b, and in preparation); the Belmar school district studied by Williams (1978, 1981a, 1981b); and rural community school districts in North and South Carolina studied by Heath (1977, 1980, 1982a, 1982b). A comparison of microethnographic studies of classroom interaction in these three settings will make an interesting study partly because of variation in the settings, and partly because of differences in the macroethnographers' background (Ogbu is African, Williams is Afro-American, and Heath is Anglo).

Another way to achieve linkage of macro and micro studies of educational issues is to fund collaborative work between researchers drawn from different relevant disciplines. In this regard, collaborative work between sociolinguists (doing classroom ethnography), anthropologists (doing community ethnography) and sociologists (collecting aggregative data), all working on the same community, would be most rewarding. I see such collaborative work as the most effective way of applying Ogbu's (1981) "multilevel" approach.

While the place of studies of classroom interaction and especially conversational analysis is not clearly specified in Ogbu's multilevel approach, his message to microethnographers remains unmistakable: use historical, cultural, structural, and social-ecological information as background data. This linkage should not be simply acknowledged by microethnographers (especially conversational analysts) but clearly demonstrated in data analysis, e.g., by tracing the interactional styles and

discourse conventions of an ethnic group in classroom situations to specific historical factors or speech events diagnostic of the group, or to folk "survival strategies" as provided in ethnographies (e.g., by Ogbu, 1978, 1982b; Williams, 1981a). Such linkage will surely afford policy makers an integrated picture of *why* and *how* particular groups behave in certain ways in the classroom, and how such behavior interacts with teaching, learning and educability (cf. Heath, 1982a).

8. If thoroughly implemented, the above suggestions should afford policy makers a very efficient tool for planning educational reform. Recommendations for educational reform have, of course, been made by several researchers. For example, Ogbu, in several publications, has suggested that an educational policy designed to improve the education of Blacks should aim

(a) to increase the orientation of ghetto children toward academic work;
(b) to reduce the conflict and distrust between Blacks and the public schools;
(c) to harness the competencies of the survival strategies for classroom teaching and learning; and
(d) to break the "job ceiling" for Blacks.

Our work on conversational analysis shows that while these changes are desirable, they cannot in themseleves constitute educational reform *per se*, so long as the classroom remains as

the predominant setting for access to knowledge; so long as the schools continue to reproduce tensions and conflicts of the larger society; so long as what is learned through high school is mainly through direct teacher-pupil interaction; and so long as certain standard communicative strategies continue to be required for effective performance within the educational system and other marked settings in the wider society (see, especially, other papers at this symposium, and the contributions in Gumperz, 1982c).

This is, of course, not to say that educational reform should be confined to the classroom, but to stress that the mechanisms underlying teaching and learning strategies must be changed first. The point I am making here is reminiscent of a suggestion already well made by Gumperz in his article aptly titled "Conversational Inference and Classroom Learning." He argues,

> Clearly, schooling as such is not the sole cause of educational failure. Society has its own powerful selection mechanisms which may override the effect of educational reform. Yet it is also true that if we look beyond the macro-statistical trends to individual careers, many minority students do quite well, under conditions that lead others to fail. After all, children spend a large part of their formative years in school and what happens there can either change or reinforce preexisting values and attitudes. To understand modern educationa problems

> we need to know how and by what mechanisms cultural, political, and economic factors interact with teaching strategies to affect the acquisition of knowledge and skill (1980, p. 4).

Thus, while the value of Ogbus's suggestions lies in highlighting the cultural, political, and economic factors that interact with teaching and learning, microethnography, especially conversational analysis, is needed to study the nature and effects of the interaction and to make recommendations for initiating educational reform. While overall structural change would be the ultimate goal of such reform, personal change within classroom settings is a logical starting point. Results of conversational analysis of classroom interaction and instructional material based on them are thus urgently needed.

Spindler (1982, p. 493) has suggested ethnographic training for teachers and other personnel connected with the school system as a way of promoting their sensitivity to cultural variation and structural differences between actors in the school environment. Instructional material based on the results of conversational analysis and other studies of classroom behavior will surely provide necessary focus for such training. It should be noted, however, that as Ogbu (1978, 1981, 1982a) has emphasized, personal change will yield little or no return without simulteneously implementing structural change. Consequently, macro- and microethnography should be regarded as essentially complementary approaches to educational problems, and policies based on their

findings should be implemented simultaneously rather than sequentially.

Finally, it should be stressed that since the acquisition of knowledge and of literacy is not completely limited to the school domain, educational reform must be designed to involve all actors with whom school children are in constant interaction (in school, at home, and in the wider community) as well as those whose overt or covert actions affect the distribution of knowledge in society. Consequently, and as I have argued elsewhere,

> Literacy, learning, and general education will become more effective when learners, teachers, researchers, policymakers, and the community at large are given the opportunity to invest in each other through cooperative programs of research, [training,] and policy making (Akinnaso, 1981b, p. 189).

Appendix

SYMPOSIUM ON URBAN COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY
American Anthropological Association
80th Annual Meeting
Los Angeles, Dec. 2-6, 1981

1.	Cook-Gumperz, J.	Communication, Language, and Social Inequality in Urban Life
2.	O'Connor, C.	The Analysis of Prosodic Signaling of Discourse Structure
3.	Seabrook, C.	Stylistic Variations in Code-Switching
4.	Murray, S. O.	Gatekeepers' shared procedures and the disproportionate elimination of Asian-American Applicants
5.	Campbell, D. R.	Linguistic Bases and Social Consequences of Filipino-American Communication Problems
6.	Young, L. W. L.	Confucian Locution
7.	Liberman, K.	The Comprehensibility of Intercultural Conversations
8.	Michaels, S. & L. Kedar	Prosody in Narrative Discourse: Implications for Classroom Learning
9.	Collins, J.	Discourse Style, Classroom Interaction, and Differential Treatment in Educational Settings
10.	Tuson, A. & H. Calsamiglia	Code-Switching and Communicative Norms

11. Akinnaso, F. Niyi Research on Minority Languages and Educational Achievement: A Synthesis and an Interpretation

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Footnotes

* The research upon which this paper is based was supported by the National Institute of Mental Health Grant #MH 26831-06. The paper highlights an aspect of the results of an ongoing project on interethnic communication and public negotiation supervised by John J. Gumperz who is also the Principal Investigator. I would like to thank him, John Ogbu, Frederick Erickson, and Ron Scollon for comments on an earlier version of the paper. Responsibility for the interpretation of the material reviewed and the opinion expressed in the paper is solely my own.

1. This is one of a series of eleven papers given at a symposium on Urban Communication and Social Inequality during the 80th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association held in Los Angeles, Dec. 2-6, 1981. The papers grew from the results of the project mentioned above and the symposium was funded by the same grant. A title list of all the papers given at the symposium is included as appendix to this paper, and they are available severally or jointly from the Language Behavior Research Laboratory, 2220 Piedmont Avenue, University of California, Berkeley, California 94720.

2. The focus of the present paper will be on the last two of Ogbu's criticisms of language explanations of educational failure. Attention will be given to the first two in

Akinnaso (1982b).

3. See Ferguson and Heath (1981) for a comprehensive picture of the linguistic situation in contemporary America. For a review of the legal and policy implications of ethnolinguistic diversity in American classrooms, see King (1981).

4. For recent reviews of Bernstein's work, see Karabel and Halsey (1977) and Gordon (1981).

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